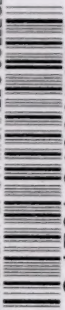



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The  
Resurrection of Christ  
Is it a Fact?

BY GIDEON W. B. MARSH

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1905

**Nihil Obstat.**

FRANCISCUS AVELING, S.T.D.,  
*Censor Deputatus.*

**Imprimatur.**

GULIELMUS PRÆPOSITUS JOHNSON,  
*Vicarius Generalis.*

WESTMONASTERII,  
*die 27 Aprilis, 1905.*



JUL - 2 1954



## P R E F A C E

THIS lecture was delivered by the author, under the auspices of the Catholic Truth Society of Scotland, in Glasgow on the 26th of March 1905, in Edinburgh on the 27th, and in Aberdeen on the 28th. It necessarily deals in an abbreviated form with the constructive proofs of the Resurrection, as also with the destructive criticism of the later and present centuries; but it is hoped that it may be of some small service in the controversy which is raging round the great proof of the divine origin of Christianity. It has been published in the present form in compliance with a widely expressed desire on the part of those who were present at its delivery. The reader will find at the end of the volume a list of some of the authorities—Christian and Rationalist—which the author has consulted in preparing his lecture. It was delivered from

## PREFACE

notes, and has had to be written out during the spare time of a busy professional life. The indulgence of the reader is therefore courteously invited if he should find any slight errors due to haste.

40 TACHBROOK STREET, LONDON, S.W.,

*April 1905.*

# THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

## IS IT A FACT?

WHEN a Christian is asked why he believes in the Blessed Trinity, he will tell you that he does so by divine Faith, not because he can understand or explain it, but because God, who is Infallible Truth, has revealed this doctrine. If you ask him further how he knows that God has revealed it, he will make answer that it is part of the teaching of Jesus Christ, who is God made man. And when you demand his proof that Jesus is God, he will refer you to the Resurrection, as the chief witness for it. Finally, he will tell you that he knows this great miracle to be a fact, in the same way that he knows all other events of history, on human, credible, and reliable evidence. His belief in the Resurrection is therefore not part of a vicious circle of divine Faith, but is rational and scientific, being built

Introduction

Faith and  
Reason

on the same class of evidence as that on which all history, and all human knowledge, are established. The Resurrection is then, to him, the natural groundwork of his belief in Christianity, and with St Paul he says, "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."\* But the rising again of Christ is still more to him. It is the foundation of his hope for Heaven, and for reunion with the dear ones "whom we have loved long since, but lost awhile." Christ is "the first fruits of them that slept." His Resurrection is the pledge and earnest to the Christian of his own rising again. Truly did St Paul say, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep."† It is the solidity of this hope that dries the mourner's tears as he stands by the open grave, and enables him to say, "O Death, where is thy sting; O Grave, where is thy victory?" Not only is the Resurrection of Christ the rock on which are built Faith and Hope, it is also the solid foundation of divine Love. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."‡ Christ has given the greatest

The Resur-  
rection the  
foundation  
of Faith

Of Hope

And  
of Charity

\* 1 Corinthians xv. 14.

† 1 Corinthians xv. 19.

‡ St John xv. 13.

proof of His love for mankind in dying upon the Cross. That this love was more than transitory or human, He has proved by His Resurrection, whereby He has shown Himself to be God—Love itself. Hence is it that the Christian is enabled to give in return the undivided and changeless devotion of his heart, knowing that it is not in vain. Thus, humanly speaking, it may be said that the Resurrection of Christ

is the foundation of Faith, Hope, and  
**Importance of the Resurrection** Charity. If, then, this great miracle can be disproved, the whole value of Christianity as a divinely revealed religion is at once and forever destroyed. It is

the knowledge and conviction of this fact that makes Christ's rising again the main object of attack by those who deny the divinity of Jesus. At a time like the present, it is incumbent upon Christians to be able "to give a reason for the faith that is in them," and to be ready to meet the many plausible objections and difficulties

which are being urged against the very  
**Need of Charity in Argument** foundation of their belief. Above all things is it necessary that in dealing with those who differ from him, the follower of Christ should be charitable, courteous, and kind—ever ready to believe the sincerity and honesty of his opponents—ever ready to meet and treat as brothers those who but too often have been driven to say harsh things by the

sharp tongues of well-meaning but too impetuous champions of Christianity. Let us then, in the spirit of charity, proceed to inquire into the grounds for our belief in the Resurrection, and into the objections which have been advanced against them. We propose to consider some

Plan of  
Lecture

of the many proofs which may be adduced to establish the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as an historical fact, and we shall divide our subject into three parts. In the first we shall deal with the purely historical evidence; in the second, with the testimony of St Paul; and in the third, with the witness of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. In dealing with the New Testament writings, we put aside, for the purposes of our consideration, all question of inspiration, and regard them as merely human, historical documents.

There is hardly any event in the life of Christ which has not been called in question. Nay, His

Destructive  
Criticism

very existence has been denied by a small number of critics. His miracles have been treated as fables. His death on Calvary has been the object of dispute. This destructive criticism of the latter and present century has found champions in such men as Baur, Strauss, Pfleiderer, Schmiedel, Keim, Weitzsäcker, Renan, Harnack, Huxley, Tyndall, the author of *Supernatural Religion*, Clodd, Robertson, Gould, Laing, and a host of other able writers.

At present we shall confine ourselves to the objections and difficulties which these authorities urge against the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### *The Death of Christ*

Before passing on to our immediate subject, we propose briefly to examine a few of the proofs that may be adduced to establish the reality of the death of Christ upon the Cross. It is clear that if Jesus did not die on Calvary He could not have risen again from the dead upon the third day. Now, a Pagan historian could have had no motive, save the recording of a well-known fact, for asserting that Christ died by crucifixion; yet Tacitus tells us in his *Annals*, "Christ, the originator of that name (*Christian*), had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius."\*

If, however, this writer had no inducement of any kind to make him record this fact, save that it was true, the Jews had every reason to hide the nationality, the teaching, and the death of Jesus, for in Him they recognised a Hebrew, who, as they thought, by claiming the Divinity, had brought disgrace upon the great teachers and upholders of Monotheism. Yet a constant Jewish tradition handed

\* *Annals* xv. 44.

down to the present day, acknowledges the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. In the Talmud it is enshrined under the article "Sanhedrin," where we read, "He (*Jesus*) was crucified on the Eve of the Pasch." Thus Pagan and Jewish testimony unite in proving the death of Christ upon Calvary, in the reign of Tiberius, and under the procurator Pontius Pilate. In the fourth Gospel, which comes down to us from the end of the first century, there is recorded a remarkable occurrence connected with the Crucifixion. We are told that a soldier pierced the side of Jesus, and that forthwith there flowed "blood and water." This incident is conclusive for us of the death of Christ, and it affords us a means of inquiring into its immediate cause. There was no motive urging the writer to make this statement, save truth. If, from it, he makes theological or doctrinal conclusions, or if he sees in it the fulfilment of some prophecy, these circumstances may affect the value of his judgment, but do not touch the fact itself. Moreover, it was a circumstance that struck him as singular, and at that time, physiology, anatomy, and morbid pathology were unknown. He could, therefore, have had no idea of attaching any scientific value to what had happened. Now let us consider the bearing of this piece of evidence upon the great objection that has been brought by Schleiermacher and Paulus against the death of Jesus.

The flowing  
of Blood and  
Water



They allege that He was in a swoon, and that in this condition He was removed from the cross into the tomb, where He subsequently revived. Gfrörer adds that the money of Joseph of Arimathea had probably bribed the authorities to connive at this deception practised upon the Jews. If Jesus had been in a fainting condition, and, as some critics allege, the soldier merely grazed His Body with the spear, and did not, as the Gospel alleges, plunge it into His side, what would have happened? In a slight faint, pure blood would have flowed; in a deep one, probably none at all. If the thrust were deep, and Christ were alive, pure blood would have escaped from the wound; if dead from any causes save those about to be mentioned, either no result would have been appreciable to the sight of the bystanders, or at most some oozing of congealed blood. But we are told that "blood and water" flowed. There are three principal conditions under which such a phenomenon could have been observed—pleurisy with effusion, pericarditis, and rupture of the muscular tissue of the heart. The Sufferer was in the prime of manhood, and although for some hours he had been subjected to torture, there is nothing to warrant us in believing that either pleurisy or pericarditis was present. On the other hand,

The Swoon  
Theory of  
Schleier-  
macher,  
Paulus, and  
Gfrörer

Pathological  
value of the  
flowing of  
Blood and  
Water

there was every condition present which might induce rupture of the heart muscle. That tender and sensitive Soul had been wrought upon by emotion the most profound and deep-seated. His love had been rejected, His zeal for His fellow men had been turned against Him. His own chosen ones had deserted Him. In that moment of terrible anguish, there happened, what has been known to occur in such cases, rupture of the heart muscle whereby the blood was poured from the interior of the heart into the pericardial sac that surrounds it. There it divided into blood-clot and serum, and when the sac was opened by the spear, the serum escaped with a rush, looking like water, and then oozed the half-clotted blood, in a treacly mass,—“the blood and water” of St John’s Gospel. Thus, in the simplicity of the narrative given us by an unscientific writer, we have evidence of the fact of death before the spear thrust, and we have also good and solid grounds whereby we may arrive at the most probable cause of death. It, moreover, gives the death blow to the Swoon Theory which it renders untenable. Tacitus, Jewish tradition, and the fourth Gospel, have proved the death of Jesus upon the Cross; but were any doubt left, it is demolished by a consideration of the circumstances under which Christ had been condemned and nailed to the tree. Hated

**Proof of the  
Death of  
Christ, from  
the circum-  
stances at-  
tending His  
Condemna-  
tion**

by the chief priests and by the people, He was hurried from tribunal to tribunal, till the words were spoken that sentenced Him to death. He was crowned with thorns, derided, spat upon, and scourged to blood, amid the derisive jeers of an infuriated mob; and, when tottering beneath the weight of His Cross, they feared He might die upon the way to Calvary, they compelled Simon of Cyrene to bear that burden, lest they should fail to satisfy their cruel passions by gloating over His agony upon the tree of shame. When at last the nails had been driven home, and He hung suspended between heaven and earth—even then this mob of howling miscreants reviled and insulted Him. Were these the men to leave Calvary before they knew for certain that their victim was dead? Were these the men to leave the insensible but animate body in the hands of friends? Their one object was His death, and we may be quite sure they never left the Cross until Jesus was certainly and unmistakably dead.

We may then dismiss all shadow of doubt about the reality of the death of Jesus upon Mount Calvary. No fact of history is or can be more certain.

*The Resurrection.—1st, The Historical Proof*

And now we shall pass on to consider the historical evidence for the Resurrection. The

first proof that we offer for consideration is the very origin of the Christian Church.

**The Resurrection** The Apostles and disciples of Christ had forsaken home and friends and occupation to follow Him whom they believed to be the Messiah. In their eyes He was the Expected One who should free Israel from the Roman yoke, and make of the chosen people the rulers of the world. He was to be the

**What the Apostles thought of Christ as the Messiah** earthly monarch, and they were to sit upon His right hand or His left. No dream of a spiritual kingdom, no thought of a suffering Messiah, had entered their minds. And so was it that when, upon that last

sad week, they followed Him to Jerusalem, they firmly believed that then He would declare Himself, and that then would begin the glories and the triumph of Shiloh. Alas for their hopes! their Master was betrayed, condemned, and crucified. Terrified at the violence of the mob and the hatred of the Sanhedrin, these Apostles

**They forsake Jesus** forsook their Leader, left Him to His fate, and fled to save themselves. And there He hung upon the Cross, mangled

and dead! All faith and hope were gone in the disciples' breasts. They had thought Him the Messiah, and there He hung dead before their eyes. It was all over. Gentle and tender as He had been during those three years in which they had learned to hang upon His words,

to render love for love, still they had been deceived—cruelly undone. They had hoped that it should have been He that should redeem Israel, but alas! all hope was at an end. He was not, He could not be, the Messiah, for the dead cannot lead a nation to victory. But worst of all, He had died upon the tree of shame, had died the death of a common slave and malefactor; and was it not written, “Cursed be he that hung upon a tree”?\* The curse of God had fallen upon Him, and He was not even a friend of God—nay, He was abandoned by Jehovah. Not the Messiah! Not even a friend of God! What a blow to all their faith, to all their hope! There was the meaning of that awful cry, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

In His Body He bore the curse of His people’s sins. Accursed of God! Long years afterwards St Paul realised it all when he wrote “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.’” † Such was the state of the apostles’ minds on that first Good Friday. Despair, dejection, and fear held possession of their minds and hearts.

\* Deuteronomy xxi. 23.

† Galatians iii. 13.

Yet six short weeks later we find these cowards valiant, these faithless ones proclaiming the Crucified as Lord and Master of Life and Death. Neither fear of Sanhedrin, nor loss of friends, nor social ostracism, nor stripes, nor suffering, nay, not even the fear of death, can hold them back. With one voice they declare that He whom the Jews had crucified was truly the Messiah, despite His death, despite the curse of the tree of shame. What has wrought this wondrous change? They themselves tell us.

The Resurrection the cause of the change He has risen from the dead, and so has reversed the curse and turned it into a blessing. He who had hung upon the Cross had burst the bonds of death, and proved Himself the Master of Death. The Seal of Heaven was upon His life and teaching. Jesus of Nazareth was Jehovah of Sinai, the Incarnate God. God was with them, and who could be against them? This was the frame of their minds at Pentecost. It is impossible, on any other grounds, to account for the change from the gloom of Calvary to the brightness of Easter. There is only one explanation tenable, the Resurrection which they alleged. They were so far from expecting His rising again that they had deserted Him. They were terrified cowards who saw the brand of God's curse upon their Master's brow. Who

should raise the dead? Only a wonder-worker, a prophet, a man of God. And there was no Elijah, no Elisha at hand. And even had there been, such a miracle was not for one whom God had forsaken. And so there was no thought of a resurrection—not even though He had spoken of it to them. Their minds were too much engrossed in the temporal prospects attached to the Messiahship, to understand Him. They did not even comprehend Him when He spoke of His approaching death. And all He had said was forgotten now in this crushing blow. The idea of a self-worked resurrection was unknown alike in Jewry and in Pagandom. Never had it been dreamed that one should or could raise himself. And so no thought of a resurrection for Jesus ever entered their minds. Whence, then, came this assertion at Pentecost of an event they could not even have dreamt in their wildest dreams? Only from the fact itself. Such was the origin of the Christian Church. It sprang from the black night of Calvary into the dazzling sunshine of Easter morning, heralded by the risen Saviour. Let us be clear as to what we mean by this Resurrection. The Church has ever meant and means by it that the mangled, lifeless Body of Jesus that had lain in the grave became whole and living again, glorified and spiritualised indeed, but

It was  
unexpected  
by them

What we  
mean by the  
Resurrection

still the same human body, endowed with new properties not ordinarily belonging to the natural body, no longer subject to the laws of matter, no longer subject to the law of death. Jesus Christ, Soul and Body, had risen again to die no more. Hence is He "the first fruits of them that slept." Others had risen at the command of a man of God, risen with the same bodies they had at death, but not glorified, not endowed with these new properties, risen indeed but only again to die. Here is the difference between the Resurrection of Jesus and all other resurrections. Herein is He truly "the first fruits of them that slept." But did the Apostles mean this when they alleged His Resurrection and declared that they had seen, handled, and conversed with Him? Or did they mean, as Harnack would have us believe, the Easter Faith without the Message? Did they mean that He was risen in power and majesty, and was at the right hand of God? Did they mean that there was no empty tomb; no risen body; no real appearances to the Apostles? Let us see. They proclaimed the Resurrection. Had they meant by that a mere spiritual idea, they would not have been dragged before the Sanhedrin, scourged, and ordered to cease from their preaching. Such persecution would have been without meaning and ridiculous. David had so risen from

What did the  
Apostles  
mean by the  
Resurrec-  
tion?



the dead, and was proclaimed as living amongst the people in his Psalms and in his wondrous influence upon the Jewish race. If they had meant such a resurrection they would have cried out before the Council, "You misunderstand us; we mean not a bodily resurrection, but a spiritual one." Yet, so far from that, they continue to assert the physical rising again, and are so understood by the authorities and the people. For this they suffered and were ready to die. They said, "We have seen Him alive, and are witnesses to His Resurrection, and we must tell the truth." At this period of Jewish history there existed two great divisions among the men of authority and learning—the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The former alleged that the bodies of the just should rise again, not, indeed, at that day, but at the end of the world—the latter denied this doctrine. When, then, the Apostles alleged the physical resurrection of Jesus, they were understood to mean what the Pharisees asserted. They differed only in alleging that Jesus had so risen then and there, and the Pharisees and Sadducees understood their statement in this sense. There is an incident in the life of St Paul which bears out what we have said. In the year A.D. 58 the apostle of the Gentiles had been arrested and was brought before

If a merely figurative rising, no need for persecution

Pharisees believed in the ultimate Bodily Resurrection of the Just

Ananias, the ex-high priest, charged with preaching the Resurrection of Jesus. There was a great tumult, and seizing a favourable moment, St Paul cried out in that vast assembly, "Men, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great cry. And some of the Pharisees, rising up, strove, saying, We find no evil in this man. What if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?"\* That St Paul was an honest man, none of the "higher critics" deny. Quite the contrary. Yet, would he have been an honest man if he had availed himself of his knowledge of the Pharisees' belief in a physical resurrection, by appealing for their support, had he not meant that Jesus had truly risen from the grave, with the same body that had been put lifeless into it? They understood him to allege this fact, and though they denied the Resurrection of Jesus, yet when St Paul appealed to the broad principles, they rose and defended him. And what he taught, all the apostles taught.

A.D. 58  
St Paul before Ananias

\* Acts xxiii. 6 to 9.

There can then be no doubt that all alike alleged the Resurrection of Jesus in the same sense in which the Christian Church has ever taught it. What, then, is the value of this testimony? We accept the evidence of witnesses in a court of law, and find a verdict upon it in matters of supreme moment. Such is often the only way known to man, and the sole means of arriving at the truth. We require in our witnesses that they be honest, truthful, unprejudiced and actual observers of that which they allege. No critic denies the honesty and truthfulness of the Apostles and of St Paul. That they were unprejudiced we have ample testimony. We have seen the state of their minds at the death of Christ, and the impossibility of their having any idea that He would rise again. It was to their interests to forsake and deny Christ, and against their interests to allege His Resurrection, for that meant persecution and death. They declare that they saw Him alive again and conversed with Him. If it be alleged that they were simple and unlettered men, the less is it likely that they could have evolved the extraordinary idea of a self-worked resurrection. And with the difficulties which are alleged, such as that "it was an age of superstition," that they were the "subjects of illusion and hallucination," we shall deal hereafter.

What is the  
value of the  
witness of  
the Apostles?

The  
Witnesses  
trustworthy

There is no escaping from the fact that we have the strongest of human testimony to the fact of the Resurrection, and only by impugning the value of all human testimony can we declare that Jesus did not rise again from the dead. To deny it is to deny the value of all evidence, to destroy all history, and to take away the very ground-work of all scientific discovery. If the evidence of the healthy senses is to be refused in the case of the Resurrection, what is its value for scientific observations? With the question of miracles we shall deal later on.

And now let us consider for a short time the peculiar position occupied in the first century of the Christian era, by the preaching of the Resurrection. It was the one pre-dominant thought in every mind. So unique, so unprecedented an event had struck every mind, filled every thought.

Writ large upon every page of those first hundred years is the one word "Resurrexit." It is not so much the Divinity of Christ, the Incarnation, the Blessed Trinity, that occupy men's thoughts. It is the Resurrection. The first action of the followers of Christ after His Ascension, was to choose a witness to this fact in the person of Matthias. The first Christian sermon ever preached was by St Peter, and its theme was, "Christ is risen." "This Jesus did God raise

The Resur-  
rection the  
teaching of  
the First  
Century

up, whereof we are all witnesses."\* SS. Peter and John were arrested at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple by the priests and Sadducees, "being grieved that they taught the people, and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead."† How absurd all this would be, if a merely spiritual resurrection were intended? And when St Peter, as the result of this arrest, stood before the Sanhedrin, he cried out, "Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by Him, this man standeth here before you whole."‡ St Peter here draws a parallel between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. He puts both upon the same plane of objective, physical, and real occurrences. Without this, his contrast has no meaning. Both were sensible and actual facts—the Resurrection as real and as much an object of the senses as the Crucifixion. Words cannot be plainer. The Apostles meant what St Paul meant, the rising again to life of the dead body of Christ, and they declare that they had seen that risen Body in the flesh. Polycarp, the disciple of St John, and Bishop of Smyrna, who laid down his life for Christ, tells us of the Resurrection as a

Evidence of  
Early Chris-  
tian Writers

\* Acts i. 32.

† Acts iv. 2.

‡ Acts iv. 10.

fact.\* He had heard all about it from the lips of an eye-witness. Irenæus, the Bishop of Lyons, was a disciple of Polycarp, and he tells us the same story.† Justin Martyr and Aristides, in the year A.D. 150, proclaim the Resurrection to the Roman Emperor; and, would time permit, we could quote from numerous writers of those early days, all of whom proclaim the Resurrection as a fact, and all of whom were in a position to sift and examine the evidence. Many of them were contemporaries of the Apostles; many of them were intimate with those who had conversed with the Apostles. All have the same story. "Jesus rose again in His Body from the grave." These are Christian witnesses, but they are Pagan converts—converted by the Resurrection. And if it be asked, "Where is the purely Pagan testimony to the Resurrection?" we would make answer, "If a Pagan could announce the Resurrection of Christ as a fact and still remain a Pagan, he would destroy the value of his own evidence, and prove himself untrustworthy." The best Pagan evidence we can adduce is that of those who on the strength of it became Christians, as did Polycarp. Time will not allow us to enter in detail into the many proofs that may be adduced to prove the Resurrection as a fact. We can but lightly touch on one or two more. The very conversion of so

Conversion  
of Jews

\* *Ad. Phil.*, cap. ix.

† *Adv. Hæres.*

many Jews at a time when the evidence was fresh and the eye-witnesses still living, is a striking proof of the historicity of Christ's rising. Of all the peoples of the earth at that time, none were so strictly monotheistic as the Jews. The very idea of idolatry was abhorrent to them. Yet we find in that first century countless numbers of them embracing Christianity and worshipping in Jesus the Incarnate God. What could have induced them, not merely to become His followers, but through the curse of the Cross, to see in Him Jehovah of Sinai? What could have induced them to adore a human being, had they not beheld in Him the glory of the Godhead? And how did they recognise Him? Only by His Resurrection. Only by Life conquering Death in His Person. They are a standing witness to the fact of His rising again. But they are not the only ones. What was it that urged the Pagans to give up their religion of pleasure and their life of sensuality? Never was the world more steeped in licentiousness than at this period. Yet in thousands they embrace Christianity, which called for self-denial, which converted their friends into enemies, made them the object of persecution and suffering, and even led them to the martyr's death? It was because they saw in the Crucified Slave, the Lord of Heaven and Earth. And how did they recognise Him? By His Resurrection.

**Pagan  
Conversions**

Well has St Paul expressed it when he wrote, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews, indeed, a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles, foolishness."\* To the Jews there was the accursed death upon the tree—to the Gentiles the degradation of a slave's execution. That Jesus was recognised as God, even the Pagan writer, Pliny, the Governor of Bithynia, bears witness, when he writes in the year A.D. 112, and tells the Emperor that the converts sing hymns to Christ as God.†

To one more historical witness of the Resurrection we must confine ourselves—the institution of Sunday as a memorial of Christ's rising from the dead. From the very commencement of the Christian Church—from the very week after Easter Day, the followers of Christ set aside the Sunday as a memorial of that wonderful event, and they met together to celebrate it. As we have said, the idea of a self-worked resurrection was unknown to the Jews. Yet within a few weeks of the alleged occurrence they are proclaiming it and celebrating it. Nothing but the actual fact could have induced them to state it, for whence could they have conceived so strange a notion? Sunday worship is thus an historical monument as real and as instructive as are the pyramids and obelisks of

**Sunday  
Worship**

**Easter  
Festival**

\* 1 Corinthians i. 23.

† *Epp. L.*, x. 97.



Egypt. There is yet another important consideration with regard to Sunday. Not only was and is it a memorial of the Resurrection, but it is a living witness to the manner in which those early Christians regarded the Person of Christ. It proves that they knew Him as God. On Mount Sinai had Jehovah given the emphatic order, "Remember the Sabbath day that thou keep it holy," and from that moment to the present the Jews have kept it with rigorous scrupulousness. Yet the Hebrew converts to Christianity abolished the Sabbath, and for it substituted the Sunday. They still worshipped Jehovah, and yet they dared to set aside His express command. There was not one word in their Scriptures or tradition that warranted so grave an action.

What could have emboldened them so to do? The recognition that Jesus of Nazareth and Jehovah of Sinai were One and the same "I am." And how could they know this save by His Resurrection? The epistles ascribed to Barnabas, and written in the first century, the writings of Ignatius at the beginning of the second, the works of Justin Martyr (A.D. 150), of Melito (A.D. 170), and of Tertullian (A.D. 180), all bear witness to what we have said. Such is but a small fragment of the mass of historical evidence which can be offered to prove the Resurrection as a fact well

Abolition of  
the Sabbath  
and substitu-  
tion of  
Sunday

Early  
Writers on  
Sunday  
Worship

and widely known. No event of bygone days has so powerful and such convincing testimony in its support. We have not dwelt upon the annual Easter Festival kept for over nineteen hundred years, nor upon the relics of those early days in private houses, in the catacombs, and in the churches; nor yet upon the prayers and ritual, the daily salutation amongst Christians, or the Symbol of the Apostles. From amongst numerous writings that have come down to our days in fragments or enshrined in quotations and extracts, we have chosen only three. To pursue the proof would lengthen out too much the task before us. Sufficient has been given to place the fact of Christ's Resurrection beyond dispute. Let us now listen to some of the objections that

**Objections—** are urged against this Christian  
**It was an** evidence. We are told that it was  
**Age of** an age of superstition, and that men  
**Superstition** were accustomed to regard as miracu-  
 lous, events which modern science has demon-  
 strated to be explicable by the ordinary laws of  
 nature. Whilst denying the possibility of miracles,  
 these critics bid us look at the small influence  
 which the alleged miracles of Christ produced,  
 and thus see how superstitious men were, for,  
 say they, unless these wonders were very common,  
 those of Christ must have worked a great effect,  
 if they happened. There are three points in this  
 objection which need consideration—the impos-

sibility of miracles, the small effect of Christ's miracles, and the nature of the Resurrection. It is impossible here to enter into a lengthy discussion of the possibility of the miraculous God, the Intelligent and Omnipotent First Cause, the Author of Nature and its laws, would no longer be God, if He were unable to alter or suspend those laws, or bring into play powers of another order. Yet the miraculous, as S. Thomas says, is but "an effect of divine power, surpassing wholly the course of nature, or an effect of divine omnipotence beyond the power of any created cause."\* And Professor Huxley has declared, "No one is entitled to say *à priori* that any given so-called miraculous event is impossible." †

How shall the finite dare to limit the Infinite, and say to Him, "Thus far shalt Thou go and no farther"? With regard to the comparatively small results that flowed from the miracles wrought by Christ, we are willing to admit that this was due to the excessive superstition of the times. But that only leads us to a consideration of our third point, the Resurrection, which is alleged by these critics to be on a par with most of the other so-called miracles—in other words, no miracle at all. If, however, it

The small  
Influence of  
Christ's  
Miracles in  
His Lifetime

\* *Contra Gentiles*, I. III. c. 101.

† *Science and Christian Tradition*, p. 133.

was an age of superstition, and so engrossed with the miraculous, that these wonders ceased to be of any telling force upon the minds of men, how comes it that the Resurrection alone worked so marvellous an effect, and attracted so much notice? How comes it that men, whom the miracles of Jesus did not move in His lifetime, are so struck by His Resurrection as to give up honourable positions and friends and home, aye, and even life itself, and embrace Christianity? Only because this stupendous miracle was absolutely unique, absolutely unprecedented, and was the unmistakable sign of Heaven that Jesus of Nazareth was the Lord of Life and Death. No mere vision, no mere myth, no mere rising in power, can explain the wonders worked by the Resurrection. Only itself as a fact can explain all the marvels that are due to it. But it is urged by other critics, "The Apostles removed the Body" "The Apostles removed the lifeless Body, and then alleged the Resurrection." Few, very few, are the writers who charge the Apostles with want of good faith and insincerity. Yet such would have been their character had they so acted. All that we know of them stamps them as sincere, honest, God-fearing men. Let us, however, consider the objection. Either they believed that Christ would rise again, or they did not so believe. If the former, there was no need for their interfer-

ence ; if the latter, all motives were absent for such action on their part, nay, there were the strongest reasons to deter them from any such an attempt. They had nothing to gain by stealing the Body and asserting His Resurrection. They had proved themselves cowards and unfaithful, for they had deserted their Master, and they were in fear for themselves, and so had hidden themselves from popular gaze. They had all to lose in the attempt, for there was the risk of detection, and in any case the persecuting vengeance of the Sanhedrin and the hatred of their fellow Jews. These were not the men to attempt to steal the Body, and then, knowing that it was all a fraud, to proclaim at the peril of their lives, that their crucified Master had risen again. But there is one circumstance which renders such an action upon their part impossible, and which, at the same time, demonstrates the Resurrection as a fact, and the empty tomb as explicable only by the reality of that Resurrection. It is the placing of the Jewish guard at the mouth of the tomb. It is a common Christian and Hebrew tradition, and is mentioned in the Gospel attributed to St Matthew — a document which, whether written as we now possess it by him or not, is at all events a written historical record coming down from the time of eye-witnesses or their immediate and personal friends. According to it, we are told that the

The Guard  
at the mouth  
of the  
Sepulchre

priests had a guard of soldiers stationed at the tomb—not because they feared that Jesus would rise again—that idea they scouted as ridiculous, even though they were aware of the prophecy of Christ—but because, as they tell us, by so doing it would be impossible for the disciples of Christ to remove His Body, and then assert that It had risen again. After taking all these pains, is it credible that they did not look into the tomb on that Saturday morning, and make sure that the Body they had come to guard was really there? The Apostles might have stolen It on Friday night, and how foolish to keep guard over the tomb if they were not sure about the presence of the Body! So we may be sure they knew It was there. Yet on Sunday morning, despite their guard, It had gone, and the tomb was empty. What had become of It? Even if there were some life left in It, there was no possibility of escape, for the mouth of the grave was sealed with heavy stones, and there were the soldiers to guard It, and the Sufferer must have been too feeble to escape. If It were dead, how could It come forth, save on the supposition that It was miraculously restored to life, and that It was endowed with new and wonderful properties not ordinarily pertaining to the human frame? This tradition renders any fraud on the part of the Apostles an impossibility, and, as we have said, it demonstrates the fact of the Resurrection. Some

critics would have us believe with Réville that the Sanhedrin, fearing lest the Apostles should steal the Body and then announce Its rising again, had removed It and hid It away. But if this were the fact, why did not the Sanhedrin confound and ridicule the Apostles when they did allege the Resurrection, by producing the Body, or, at least, by publicly announcing what had become of It. Nothing was easier either six weeks or six months afterwards. Yet nothing of the kind was attempted, and for the best of reasons, because no such removal by the Sanhedrin had ever taken place.

Réville's  
Theory of  
removal by  
the  
Sanhedrin

### *2nd.—Proof from the Writings of St Paul*

And now that we have considered what we may call the purely historical proofs of the Resurrection, let us turn to the evidence offered us by St Paul. We have already seen what the Apostles and what he meant by the Resurrection they preached in common. It was the return to endless life of the dead Body that had rested in the tomb. It was a bodily resurrection. When then St Paul, or indeed any other writer, tells us that he saw the risen Christ, there is only one meaning to be attached to his words,—that with his fleshly eyes he saw the Body that had

St Paul  
declared the  
Bodily Re-  
surrection of  
Christ, and  
that he had  
seen Christ  
in the body

been dead, alive again. To intend anything but this would be deliberately to employ language that implied one thing whilst meaning quite another. This would be dishonest and in the highest degree criminal. And as we have seen, there is hardly any critic, however hostile to Christianity he may be, who would assert that of the Apostles or of St Paul. Now let us consider the evidence given us by St Paul himself in writings which the "higher critics" declare unquestionably to have been written by him. And we will take the view held by the more rigorous school, and ask what St Paul says in the six epistles which alone they hold to be undoubtedly genuine. We refer to the 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians, written in A.D. 53, the two epistles to the Corinthians, bearing date A.D. 57, those to the Romans and Galatians of the year A.D. 58, and that to the Philippians, penned in A.D. 62. We have carefully searched all the thirteen epistles attributed to St Paul, and in them we find twenty-one references to the Resurrection. It is a curious and significant fact that, of that number, no fewer than nineteen occur in the very epistles recognised by these critics. There can then be no doubt of the certainty in St Paul's mind that Jesus rose again, and it is moreover in these very epistles that he declares so emphatically that he has seen the risen Saviour.

The Epistles  
generally  
allowed to be  
Genuine

Nineteen  
references to  
the  
Resurrection



Words cannot be clearer. A stronger witness we cannot have. It is impossible here to enter into a detailed account of the life of St Paul.

**Character of  
St Paul**

He had been a persecutor of the Christians. A fervent Jew, a zealot, a member of the Sanhedrin, he had learned all that could be said against Christ and his followers, and in his zeal he hastened to crush the newly-born community. He was a man of learning, a lawyer versed in the Torah. Some of his own indisputable records have reached us. Yet suddenly this fervent persecutor becomes one of the persecuted, this ardent Jewish monotheist who had reviled and derided Jesus of Nazareth, becomes a foremost believer, and a champion of the Resurrection. Why? What has

**His  
Conversion**

happened? He tells us himself in these six epistles. "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"\* "And, last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time."† He had disbelieved in the Resurrection, but his own eyes had convinced him of his error, for with them he had beheld the risen Jesus. What stronger motive for his change could he assert or have? And again he says, "For I give you to understand, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn

\* I Corinthians ix. 1.

† I Corinthians xv. 8.

it; but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion; how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it. And I made progress in the Jews' religion above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased Him who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me, by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, immediately I condescended not to flesh and blood, neither went I to Jerusalem to the Apostles who were before me; but I went into Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus."\*

evident that in this passage St Paul "Reveal His Son in Me" is speaking of the result of his seeing Christ. He tells us that formerly he was a persecutor and an unbeliever, but that God in His mercy had enlightened his mind, and caused him to see in Jesus the very Son of God, and no impostor. And he tells us also that this mental change came over him at or near Damascus, for so much is implied in the expression, "and again I returned to Damascus." When, then, an attempt is made to explain this quotation as referring directly to the appearance of Christ to St Paul on the way to Damascus, violence is done to it. And still more is this the case when,

\* Galations i. 11-17.

as some critics state, St Paul is here represented as giving us to understand that his sight of the risen Christ was by mental illumination only. To say that the expression "reveal his Son in me" refers to the appearance of Christ as a mere illumination of the mind, is clearly to misunderstand the writer. Schmiedel admits that this passage in no way excludes the alleged appearance on the way to Damascus. Later we shall consider the accounts of that incident given us in the Acts of the Apostles, and we shall find that they are mutually corroborative.

It has been urged that St Paul proved himself wanting in judgment when, as he declares, after "He did not corroborate his experience" his conversion, he did not seek for further advice and enlightenment by going up to Jerusalem to confer with the Apostles. But is that so? He had learned all that was to be said against Christ and His followers. He had been told that the alleged resurrection was a fraud; and now, with his own eyes, he sees the risen Christ, and from His lips receives the divine commission. Would it not have been to doubt the reality of his experience, and the words of Jesus, in Whom He saw at last the very Son of God, had he gone at once to Jerusalem and sought for further corroboration? He was so sure of what had happened that not a shade of doubt remained in his mind. And that he was no rash or head-

strong convert is shown by his retiring to Arabia. He did not at once rush into missionary work. Yet his conviction must have been very strong, for he who was the pet of the Sanhedrin, the leader of the anti-Christians—he forsook position and fortune and popular esteem, home and friends—all, for the sake of conscience. The evidence must indeed have been telling that could work so great a change. Three years later, A.D. 38, as he informs us,\* he spent a fortnight with St Peter, and met St James, and they were in harmony on the subject of the Resurrection. Fourteen years later (A.D. 49) he was in Jerusalem, and found himself in perfect harmony with SS. Peter, James, and John. They all had seen the risen Jesus. This visit he records in his Epistle to the Galatians,† and he further tells us that all three “gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.”‡ SS. Peter and James, John, and Paul, are all witnesses to the bodily Resurrection of their Lord and Master. Their experiences were identical.

Now let us turn to the Acts of the Apostles, written by the companion and friend of St Paul, about the year A.D. 79. He narrates the well-known account of the appearance of Jesus to St Paul on the way to Damascus. This he does in the ninth chapter.

\* Galatians i. 18.

† Galatians ii. 1 and 2.

‡ Galatians ii. 9.

Later, he  
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Later, in the twenty-second chapter, he tells us how the Apostle himself recounted to the Sanhedrin, in the year A.D. 58, the same story, and how, as we have already seen, he made the famous appeal to the Pharisees. In the twenty-sixth chapter once again St Luke describes his Master as relating the appearance at Damascus in the presence of Festus and Agrippa in the year A.D. 60. All these narratives are corroborated by the Apostle himself in the first chapter of the Galatians, as we have already seen. True it is that in all these accounts we are not told in so many words that it was there and then that St Paul had seen his Lord, but it is implied in the words which refer to his companions, in which we are informed, as by contrast, that they, indeed, saw nobody—implying that their leader did. And Ananias, when he visited St Paul, said to him, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, He that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest.”\* And Barnabas confirmed this when he said, on presenting St Paul to the Apostles, “how he (Paul) had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to him.”

There can be no doubt that the Apostle of the Gentiles, when he says, “Have not I seen Jesus Christ the Lord?” is referring to the Damascus episode. But it is alleged by some of the critics that this appearance was only a vision or revelation—that it was subjective, not objective,

Objection—  
It was only  
a Vision

\* Acts ix. 17.

and this they allege because St Paul frequently refers to visions, revelations, and trances. They declare him to have been so absorbed by these visions that he could not distinguish between them and reality, and so they put the Damascus episode into this category. It is, however, very far from true that St Paul could not and did not clearly distinguish between a vision and a physical objective appearance. He is, on the contrary, most explicit in declaring when he is the subject of such experiences, and he is most careful to announce the appearance on the way to Damascus as wholly and entirely different from vision or revelation or trance. When he is speaking from the castle steps in Jerusalem, in the year A.D. 49, and addressing the Jews, he tells them of his seeing Jesus at Damascus; and then, referring to a subsequent occasion he says, "And it came to pass when I was come again to Jerusalem, and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance, and saw him."\* Can distinction be clearer? Surely St Paul here discriminates between a trance and an objective reality. And if it be objected that this is not in his own writing, let us turn to his second epistle to the Corinthians and the 12th chapter, where he says, "If I must glory (it is not expedient indeed :) but I will come to the visions and revelations of the Lord." And yet from these visions he excludes what would have been

\* Acts xxii. 17 and 18.

his greatest, had it been one, the appearance on the road to Damascus, and contents himself with referring to an occasion when he was carried up to the third heaven. Clearly, he did not consider the appearance of Jesus as a vision or revelation. And he is most particular when narrating the vision referred to in this 12th chapter, to tell us that he did not know whether he was in the body or out of it. Who shall say that St Paul cannot distinguish the mental from the physical—the subjective from the objective? Then he goes on to tell us, “And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me.” Even this passage is quoted as a proof of the subjection of St Paul’s mind to hallucinations and delusions, for there are critics who tell us that this sting of the flesh means epilepsy, and that, consequently, St Paul was an epileptic visionary, and his Damascus episode was the outcome of this disease. The

Objection—  
St Paul was  
an Epileptic

Greek word employed to express “*sting of the flesh*” is *skolops*, and it has no reference whatever to such a complaint. Its translation is rather “stake” than sting. We do not, however, propose at this moment to pursue the connotation of the word—a pursuit which is absolutely disastrous for the critics who would read epilepsy into it. We prefer, for the purposes of this argument, to accept the meaning of the word as

implying epilepsy. Starting, therefore, from these critics' standpoint, let us follow out the matter. This epilepsy, St Paul tells us, was given to him after his translation to heaven as a means to keep him humble. Good! He tells us that this translation took place fourteen years before he wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. The "higher critics" tell us that the date of that epistle is A.D. 57. Now, taking fourteen from fifty-seven, we arrive at the year 43 as the date at which he became an epileptic. His conversion occurred, according to the majority of these same critics, in the year 35—or, according to Harnack, the greatest of modern critics, in 30. How, then, could the appearance of Jesus to St Paul on the road to Damascus be the outcome of an epileptically diseased mind, seeing that, according to these same critics, he did not become an epileptic until eight, or, according to Harnack, thirteen, years after the Damascus incident? The critics surely have cut the ground from under their own feet. It seems as though any explanation, save that given by him concerned, is to be accepted; and yet none save his own, will explain what happened at Damascus. Mr Gould, in his *Concise History of Christianity*, suggests that spasms of the heart is meant. We do not see how that helps the rationalist cause at all. St Paul's evidence thus stands the severest criticism, and comes out triumphant. He saw the



risen Jesus in the flesh ; and when he tells us, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, that his own experience was but one amongst many ; even had we no other evidence, we know that he meant to say that Jesus had as truly appeared in the flesh alive after his crucifixion to St Peter, the eleven, the five hundred, and to St James, as to himself. And all this, he tells us in that fifteenth chapter, he had learnt from the lips of these very witnesses. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received."\* And he puts the disciples' experience on the self-same footing as his own, and we have seen that his was objective and real, Jesus in the flesh and Paul in the flesh. We cannot conclude the evidence of the apostle of the Gentiles without a passing reference to his appeal to the five hundred. "Then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once: of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep." It was to the Corinthians he wrote this—to the inhabitants of a city famous in the Roman Empire—the city whither flocked thousands to see the games that have become immortalised. It was a dangerous thing to do, if those five hundred had never existed, or if there were none still living. Yet St Paul knew that what he said was true, and he fearlessly declared

\* 1 Corinthians xv. 3.

it. There was no great difficulty in verifying or disproving his statement at that time, for intercourse between the great cities of the Roman Empire was frequent and easy. As Gibbon tells us, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*,\* there were excellent roads and a splendid system of posts in those days, and the Corinthians could easily have tested the truth or falsehood of the statement. St Paul knew that his statement was true and capable of proof, or he never would have made it. Need we pursue his evidence further? There can be no doubt that if we had nothing but his six epistles, they are more than enough to demonstrate the Resurrection as an historical and incontrovertible fact.

*3rd.—Proof from the Gospels.*

Lastly, we come to the evidence of the Gospels. It is, indeed, superfluous, but we will briefly consider it. Once again, we desire to call attention to the fact that we do not treat of the question of inspiration. We are dealing with all the writings of the New Testament which concern us, as merely human, historical documents. It is, moreover, impossible, in the time at our command, to enter into a discussion of the question of authorship and composition. For the present we must content ourselves with saying, that,

The Four  
Gospels

\* Chapter ii.

according to the best evidence, these Synoptic Gospels, with the fourth Gospel, come down to us from the first century of Christianity, and that they were written, if not by eye-witnesses, at least by the companions of eye-witnesses of that which they record. They were widely circulated, and accepted as a practically correct record of the events they narrate. They were written as mere memoirs for those already in possession of the facts, not as complete chronological records, not as an explanation and defence of the Christian faith for non-believers. It would be useless to narrate in detail all they say of the Resurrection of Christ. That is matter of common knowledge. All alike allege the death of Jesus, the empty tomb, the appearances of the risen Christ in Jerusalem or in Galilee. It is a simple narrative, ingenuous and sincere. There is no attempt at collaboration; no effort to astonish the reader; no rhetorical expressions of wonderment. Their very apparent discrepancies only affect details, and are a guarantee to us that the witnesses are trustworthy. In a court of law, we should suspect collusion if the witnesses agreed in every minute particular. We expect and require only agreement upon the main point. And this we have in the Gospels. Their apparent disagreement only touches minor points, and is capable of explanation.

Their His-  
torical Value

What, then, are the objections to the Gospel story? We are told that they are not the recorded experiences of eye-witnesses themselves. Did opportunity permit, they do not come from eye-witnesses we should disprove this statement. Suffice it now to say that they are the work of eye-witnesses, or of those who were intimate with them. St Matthew was an eye-witness, and so was St John; and St Mark was the interpreter of St Peter, and St Luke the companion of St Paul. These Gospels were written at a time when all the evidence was fresh in men's minds, and when a false statement was easy of correction. They are the most valuable historical records coming down to us from the very time when the incidents they record were matter of public knowledge. What better evidence can we have? On another occasion we may be privileged to enter more fully into this matter, and show that the very difficulties alleged against these writings are in reality the best evidence in their support. The Gospels corroborate all we have said, and are corroborated by it. For instance, the apparent differences as to the time when the visits were made to the empty tomb, arise from a false impression that the writers refer to one and the same visit. Hence, we have the difficulty as to the persons present at the tomb, the discourses of the angels, their number

Objection—  
They do not  
come from  
eye-  
witnesses

Visits to the  
Tomb

and position, and many similar questions. They are all capable of a reasonable and natural explanation. We only regret that time does not now permit us to enter upon these matters. Weitzsäcker, for example, has declined to accept the statement of the empty tomb on the ground that the most reliable witness, St Paul, never mentions it. But surely he tells us that Christ was crucified, dead and buried, and that on the third day he rose again with the same body that had been laid into the grave. What is that but the empty tomb?

Weitz-  
säcker's  
Objection  
that St Paul  
does not refer  
to the empty  
Tomb

### *General Objections*

Before concluding, we shall refer to the principal theories which have been propounded to explain away the Resurrection as a fact. And, first of all, we come again across the Swoon Theory of Schleiermacher, Paulus and Gfrörer. We have dealt with it so far as regards the death of Jesus.

General  
Objections

Let us now briefly consider it in its bearing upon the Resurrection. It is asserted that the insensible but animate body of Jesus revived in the tomb and re-appeared to the disciples, thus giving rise in their minds to the idea of the Resurrection. We have already seen that Jesus was unquestionably dead; but accepting, for the

The Swoon  
Theory

purpose of argument, that He was not, with Strauss we would ask, how it was possible, after all He had suffered, that Christ should so appear to His disciples as to convince them that He had risen again? His enfeebled and suffering frame must have shewn them that He was no risen Conqueror of Death, but merely a wreck saved from the final throes of Mortality. This theory will not explain the Resurrection.

Then we have Renan's suggestion, an echo of that of Celsus, that it was the fervour and imagination of St Mary Magdalen that inspired the Apostles' minds with the idea. She could not bring herself to imagine that One so gentle, good, and noble, could remain in the grip of Death, and so she imagined that He had risen, and her enthusiasm carried away the minds and hearts of the Apostles. The stern evidence of fact is against this theory, for we know that the Apostles refused to believe the evidence of all the women, and that they were only convinced of its truth when they themselves had seen and handled the risen Christ.

Nor is Keim's explanation any better, in his celebrated "Telegram from Heaven." In his anxiety to defend Jesus and the Apostles, he tells us, that God infused a special knowledge into the minds of the Apostles, whereby they knew that Jesus was in Heaven, sitting in glory at the right

Renan's  
Theory  
about  
St Mary  
Magdalen

Keim's  
Theory of  
the "Tele-  
gram from  
Heaven"

hand of God, and that as a result of this information they had visions of Jesus risen, and so came to believe that they had seen him alive again and in the flesh. This is only to substitute one miracle for another; and if miracles are to be allowed at all, why not the more probable one that Jesus had truly risen from the grave? Moreover, Keim's theory gives the divine sanction to the life and teaching of Jesus, and we know that He claimed the Godhead when He said, "Amen, Amen, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I Am." And again, did He not reply to Philip when the latter asked Him "Lord, show us the Father," "So long a time have I been with you, and have you not known me, Philip? he that seeth me, seeth the Father also."\* Thus the "telegram" is the divine approbation of this claim, and Jesus is God, and the miracle of the Resurrection ceases to be a difficulty. This theory, moreover, makes God responsible for the delusions of the Apostles when they imagined they saw Jesus risen in the flesh, and responsible, too, for the wholly wrong impression on which Christianity is built, if Christ be not risen from the dead. It will not stand.

Lastly, we come to the pet explanation of to-day, the celebrated Vision Theory, held in one form or another by Schmiedel, Strauss, and Pfeleiderer. According to it, the Apostles had subjective visions

\* St John's Gospel, chap. xiv., vv. 8 and 9.

of the risen Jesus, which they firmly believed to be real and objective, and on the strength of these they preached the Resurrection. But that visions of so unexpected and unprecedented an event should have arisen, mental preparation and much time were needed. We have already seen that, far from any such condition existing, the minds of the Apostles were in a state of despair, faithlessness, and dismay. There was everything to prevent the birth of such an idea, and nothing to give rise to it. And, whether we accept three days or six weeks as the time during which the mental preparation was being achieved, the time is wholly inadequate. If, against the evidence of history, we grant them many months during which they worked out this idea, we are still no nearer an explanation, for, during that extended time, they had opportunity for calm reflection; and it is inconceivable that they should unanimously have conceived so extraordinary an idea. And even granting that such were the case, would not the sealed tomb and the ridicule of the Sanhedrin and Jewish people have brought honest men to their senses? If, again, contrary to history, we allow that they departed to Galilee on Good Friday, how could they hear of the alleged Resurrection by the third day? Nay, how could they even have reached that distant district by the Sunday? But again, even had they reached it, and we grant them an extended



time for the development of the idea, once again we are confronted by the sealed tomb and the sober facts on their return to Jerusalem. If they all were suffering from excitement, when that cooled down, as in time it must have done, human experience shows us that one or other of the company would have given away the story, and made it the ridicule of Judaism. Yet far from that is the fact. They persevered for years amid obloquy and persecution in declaring that Jesus had truly risen, and that they had seen Him, and for this they laid down their lives in martyrdom. The Vision Theory will not stand examination and criticism.

Only the Resurrection as a fact can explain all the historical testimony we have adduced in the origin of Christianity, the conversion of Jews and Pagans, the institution of Sunday, the conversion of St Paul, the records of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. No fact of history is better or so well attested as the Resurrection of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Nineteen hundred years ago He hung upon the tree of shame; His head was crowned with thorns, and from His hands and feet and Sacred Body flowed streams of blood. On that awful Friday was heard the farewell cry from His dying lips, "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit for Thy work is finished." And He bowed His head to give the human

race the kiss of Peace. To-day, He is in our midst, no longer crowned with thorns, but wearing upon His brow the diadem of His people's love. From His hands and feet flow streams of grace and mercy, and His face is refulgent with the light of Love. Gathered around Him is a multitude, countless as the sands upon the seashore, and from their lips and hearts arises the song, "Amen. Benediction and glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving, honour and power and strength to our God for ever and ever, Amen."\* And gathered there too, in reverent homage, are the rationalist thinkers of every age, and from their lips and from their hearts goes up the cry, "Hail, Thou Godlike Man!" God speed the day when they too, hand in hand with the Christian believer, may exclaim no longer, "Hail, Thou Godlike Man," but, rather, "Hail Thou God, made Man."

\* Apocalypse vii. 12.

# LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL WRITERS CONSULTED BY THE AUTHOR

## CHRISTIAN

### LATIN AUTHORITIES.

Hurter's Dogmatic Theology.  
Perrone's Dogmatic Theology.  
St Thomas's Summa contra Gen-  
tiles.  
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